

**Riverside General Plan Program  
Arts Subcommittee**

**Meeting #1  
Monday, May 19, 2003  
Mayor's Ceremonial Room, 7th Floor, City Hall  
3900 Main Street, Riverside**

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On Monday, May 19, 2003, the Riverside General Plan Arts Subcommittee held its first meeting. The meeting was led by City Planning Department staff and The Arroyo Group (members of the CBA consultant team). The following people were in attendance:

**Arts Subcommittee Members:**

David Willmon  
Joan Wells  
Damon Castillo  
Kathy Wright  
Tom Powell  
Bob Stein  
Mark Schooley  
Kathy Dillon  
Colleen McBride  
Vince Moses

**City Planning Staff:**

Ken Gutierrez  
Craig Aaron  
Diane Jenkins  
Patricia Brenes  
Wendell Bugtai

**The Arroyo Group:**

Larry Morrison  
Jean D'Agostino

The focus of the meeting was to discuss the purpose and process of the Arts and Culture Element of the General Plan update, define the role of the Arts Subcommittee and brainstorm issues related to arts and culture in Riverside. The brainstorming session was focused around five broad questions that provided a framework for discussion. These questions and the comments made by the Arts Subcommittee are provided below:

## **What are potential ways that visual and performing arts can contribute to the life of the City?**

- The Arts provides a method for better understanding other cultures and each other.
- Creates a sense of place – cohesiveness.
- Projects neighborhood identities.
- Gives students/people a way to express themselves and develop talents.
- Proactive solution to community problems.
- Can bring money to the city.
- Professionals attracted to communities with art.
- Raises spirits, builds energy.
- Provides “branding” and marketing of who we are, what defines Riverside.
- Can help revitalize deteriorating neighborhoods.
- Provides an excuse to play.
- Gives students a chance to develop skills they can use in life.
- Helps connect young people to school and education.
- Provides a real economic impact.
- Inland Empire is fastest growing place in nation, therefore there is a major opportunity to attract people to Riverside through art and culture – we should move aggressively to capture this market.
- Crime rates are lower where arts facilities are.

## **How can the visual and performing arts relate to some or all of Riverside’s 26 neighborhoods?**

- All Downtown arts facilities do outreach to schools/neighborhoods – these programs bring students from all neighborhoods Downtown. These outreach programs are under recognized.
- However, these programs should be extended more into the neighborhoods by doing something that attracts entire families – often the parents are not connected to the educational programs of their children.
- Need to take art into the neighborhoods themselves – to build connections & broaden the reach of art and culture.
- Need more public art in communities/neighborhoods and to use local artists.
- It is critical to work with the libraries when promoting art in the neighborhoods.
- Also, promote arts through events that are not primarily art/cultural events – e.g., health fairs.
- Weave arts into every aspect of life in the neighborhoods and in the community – education, health, shopping, aesthetic, etc.
- Opportunities for performing arts in parks in all the neighborhoods – also in schools.
- Also, Riverside Arts Council is working on arts programs with community centers to reach the neighborhoods.

## **What roles are Riverside’s educational institutions currently playing in arts and culture in the City?**

- Riverside School for the Arts – its coming together – having neighborhood discussions about RSA’s role in community and in the Downtown Arts, Culture & Entertainment District.

- County Office of Education hosts student artwork in the conference center, provides a technical support staff person, and has an art scholars program.
- Riverside Unified School District purchases student art work and hangs in the District Office.
- Riverside Arts Council is working on arts programs with after school programs.
- An important element in education is having working artists as mentors to children/students.
- An excellent program is the Mission Inn Family Voices project, a creative writing program where students write about a special family artifact and their family history. This program should be expanded – it reaches families.
- Education is a key component to involve children and parents in art.
- Funding is particularly difficult at the elementary school level for arts.
- Need to show direct correlation between the arts and improved text scores. This is what provides an impact to policy makers and funding sources.
- It is important to weave the State Standards based core curriculum with arts curriculum – work art back into the teachers' curriculum.
- Many of the middle & high schools in Riverside have performance space and space for making visual art.

### **What are current constraints to the realization of the full potential for arts and culture in Riverside?**

- The existing art and cultural institutions in Riverside have very impressive developed programs already. What they need is more funding and more space – the artists & programs are already here.
- We have a marketing problem citywide.
- Need to show how art can be a method of crime prevention, pregnancy prevention, etc. – translate the arts this way and that can lead to more funding potential.
- To get more funding, we need more promotion, more publicity...we have the programs – we need to make it more known.
- We need more coordination among arts organizations to get citywide understanding and commitment. This lack of coordination is a constraint.
- We need to increase and improve leadership for arts and bring all like organizations together for a citywide connection and understanding.
- There is a misconception that there are only “x” number of dollars available for arts. This becomes a barrier to cooperation among art organizations because of perceived competition.
- The vision for incorporating arts in private development is not always happening. We need to be more creative in what is required of developers – maybe more public space for art – not just sculpture or one public art piece. Developers should provide not just a public art piece, but a place for public art to be.
- We need more public space to show art and be able to participate in and experience art.
- We need more promotion of arts.
- We need to expand our definition of what art is in order to attract more diverse communities and bring in more young people – we need to broaden the definition of culture.

**What do you see is the role of public art in the City today? Is there enough? What works and what doesn't?**

- The City's leadership must point out the economic benefits of a vibrant arts community.
- City's role should be to set policy about public art – there is currently no policy about art in public places.
- We need to identify a citywide identity across Riverside.
- City's role is promotion of the Arts, Culture & Entertainment District and promotion of the City – there is potential in all areas of the City.
- Through creative zoning and land use, the City can tie arts to everyday needs of people – e.g., retailing, business incubators using art, etc.
- The City is interested in “branding” of the overall city through public art.
- We need improvement in overall aesthetics/signage through City Planning.
- Bring the image of water (river) throughout the City – incorporate into all new development through developments standards and design guidelines.
- The City can provide a “canvas” for art – e.g., freeway underpasses, utility boxes.
- Add arts/aesthetics into all City functions – Public Works, Planning, Parks & Rec., etc.
- Use art in Industrial/Business Parks and have performing arts in these employment areas (Hunter Business Park & Sycamore Canyon).
- Community Arts Association held a successful Art Walk – these work in promoting the arts.
- Arts should take advantage of festivals – e.g. Orange Blossom Festival – maybe a sister event or make this an arts festival.
- Want to see more smaller arts and culture events that happen more frequently, rather than large festivals.
- There should be more “mini” arts events – out in various neighborhoods.
- Fiesta de Familia – cross cultural successful event that is growing – heavy arts component – sponsored by Press Enterprise. This works – it is a very successful event.
- Examples of exemplary public art relating to gateways, natural space, streetscapes, etc.:
  - 1% for Arts – Sacramento.
  - Driving brochure of public art in Palm Desert.
  - Wood Streets, Victoria Avenue, Mount Rubidoux.
  - Architecture, well preserved neighborhoods in Riverside.
  - Using the arts in non-static ways – e.g., cows in Chicago – it's a great way to raise awareness.
  - Performers in public places, such as train stations, street corners, etc. – e.g. Sydney, Denver, New Orleans.
- Riverside has historically been called the City of Churches. This should be considered again as a way to promote the City and its culture.

**Next Meeting:**

The Arts Subcommittee agreed to hold the next meeting (July 14, 2003) at the Riverside Art Museum.